

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 19, and 21 and has added new claims 39-41. Applicants note with appreciation the Office's indication that claims 27-38 are allowable over the prior art of record and that claims 3-8, 12-17, and 21-26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The Office has rejected claims 1-2, 9, 10-11, 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent Application Publication 20020115353A1 to Zeiler et al (Zeiler). The Office asserts that Zeiler discloses an electrical connection system with a first electrical connector having a first housing in Fig. 4 with one or more slots, a second electrical connector having a second housing 10, a locking device locks the first electrical connector to the second electrical connector when the locking device 76 or 78 is seated over at least a portion of the first housing and the connectors extending through the slots to engage the second housing and the second housing also has one or more locking indents at 74. The Office asserts that when the first electrical connector is coupled to the second electrical connector; each of the slots in the first housing is in alignment with one of the locking indents in the second housing, the locking device extends through the slots into the locking indents at 74 to lock the first electrical connector to the second electrical connector as being the male and the female connector.

Zeiler does not disclose or suggest, "wherein the locking device is detachable from the first and second electrical connectors" as recited in claims 1, 10, and 19. The Office's attention is respectfully directed to FIGS. 1-5 and paragraph 32 in Zeiler which illustrates and discloses that the slider 76 is supported on and slidable along the support portion 38, but does not disclose that the slider is or could be detachable from the support portion 38. Accordingly, in Zeiler the slider 76 is a permanent part of the quick lock power cord.

In contrast, the present invention provides a locking device which is detachable from the first and second electrical connectors. One of the advantages of a detachable locking device is that it is easy and inexpensive to manufacture, as disclosed in paragraph 25 in the above-identified patent application, as opposed to the more complicated locking devices which are manufactured and assembled to be permanent parts of the devices to be locked. Additionally, although the detachable locking device is easy and inexpensive to

manufacture, it still provides a secure locking system that only an operator can release as disclosed in paragraph 10 in the above-identified patent application. Accordingly, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 10, and 19. Since claims 2 and 9 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 1, claims 11 and 18 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 10, and claim 20 depends from and contains the limitations of claim 19, they are distinguishable over the cited references and patentable in the same manner as claims 1, 10, and 19.

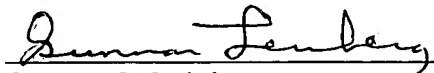
The Office has objected to claims 3-8, 12-17, 21-26 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claim 3 to substantially incorporate the subject matter of claim 1, claim 10 to substantially incorporate the subject matter of claim 12, and claim 21 to substantially incorporate the subject matter of claim 19. Accordingly, claims 3, 12, and 21 are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Since claims 4-8 depend from claim 3, claims 13-17 depend from claim 12, and claims 22-26 depend from claim 21, dependent claims 4-8, 13-17, and 22-26 are also now believed to be in condition for allowance. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the objection to claims 3-8, 12-17, 21-26.

Applicants have also added new dependent claims 39-41 which are believed to be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

In view of all of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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